

YSU launches new degree in construction technology

YSU launches new degree in construction technology The training needs of the local construction industry have changed in recent years, and Youngstown State University's Rayen College of Engineering and Technology is responding.

This fall, the college plans to launch a new associate of technical study degree in construction technology that will allow construction workers, including carpenters, sheet metal laborers, steel and iron workers and others, to advance their careers or move into management.

David Kurtanich, assistant professor and coordinator of civil and construction engineering technology at YSU, said the new program will help fill a void in the local and regional construction industry.

"It will be a great benefit to everybody," he said. "The trade unions and the local contractors have indicated that they need people with these advanced skills and are very enthusiastic about this new program. It's something the community has requested, and the College of Engineering and Technology has responded."

Kurtanich said the degree, which has been in the works for about two years, is designed for individuals with prior experience in the construction field who want to move into supervisory positions such as site foreman, superintendent or construction manager.

The 61-credit program will cover skills such as project planning and management, estimating and scheduling, as well as addressing the needs for communication and teamwork skills essential to supervise construction crews, he said.

Students entering the program can receive up to 30 semester hours of credit for approved prior apprentice training or work experience.

Kurtanich said many of the students would be individuals with 15 to 20 years of experience in the construction industry. Many of them, he said, are looking to lighten the physical demand of working in the field, as they grow older. Many also are looking to advance to increase their salaries by 10 to 20 percent or more, Kurtanich said.

The program, which won the approval of the YSU Board of Trustees in March and is now before the Ohio Board of Regents, was developed under the leadership of Kurtanich; William Wood, associate professor and director of the School of Technology; and Cynthia S. Hirtzel, dean of the Rayen College of Engineering and Technology.

The college currently offers associate's and bachelor's degrees in civil and construction engineering technology. The new program will enhance those programs and provide opportunities for non-traditional students for career advancement, Hirtzel said. She commended the vision Kurtanich and noted that these new programs will probably attract and certainly retain workers in the area.

The college also offers a construction management technology certificate for individuals who want to learn advanced construction management skills but may not be interested in pursuing a full associate's degree, Kurtanich said. Most of the courses in the certificate program apply to the associate degree in civil and construction engineering technology.

The college also is working on developing a bachelor's degree in construction management. Currently, students can enter this program through an individualized curriculum program and work towards the construction management degree.

"This array of programs represents a career ladder that a student can pursue at his or her own rate as he or she wishes," Hirtzel said.

For more information, contact Kurtanich at 330-941-3745.